Ship's surgeon Johann Peter Oettinger. A Hinterlander in the Atlantic slave trade, 1682-1696

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Slavery Hinterland

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Slavery Hinterland

Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850

Edited by

Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft

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Contents

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1

Ship's Surgeon Johann Peter Oettinger: A Hinterlander in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1682–96

CRAIG KOSLOFSKY AND ROBERTO ZAUGG

The life and travels of the barber-surgeon Johann Peter Oettinger (1666–1746) connect a Central European hinterland, the region of Franconia in south-western Germany, with the Atlantic slave trade by way of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) and the Brandenburg African Company (BAC). The small town of Künzelsau, where Oettinger died a respected barber-surgeon in 1746, lies only about ten miles from the tiny village of Orendelsall where he was born, son of a Lutheran pastor, in 1666. But as a young man Oettinger travelled across the Holy Roman Empire and the Dutch Republic, and then on to the West Indies and Africa in the course of making that ten-mile journey. Oettinger recorded his travels in a vivid manuscript journal, written from 1682 to 1696, but until now his account was known only through a partial and heavily manipulated retelling, published in 1885–86 by Paul Oettinger (1848–1934), a Prussian officer and descendant of Johann Peter.[1] Paul Oettinger based his shortened and heavily rewritten 'edition' on a clear and apparently accurate 1779 copy of the original manuscript. This copy, by Johann Peter's grandson, Georg Anton Oettinger (1745–after 1831), was handed down within the Oettinger family until 1982, when it was donated, together with

1 In this literary undertaking, Paul Oettinger was supported by Vice Admiral Ludwig von Henk (1820–94), a member of the German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft) and a future MP of the German Conservative Party (Deutschkonservative Partei). Their text was first serialised in the popular magazine *Schorers Familienblatt. Eine illustrierte Zeitschrift* 6 (1885), pp. 134–7, 150–1, 180–3, 262–4, 398–9 and 412–15, and then as a separate book: Paul Oettinger, *Unter kurbrandenburgischer Flagge. Deutsche-Kolonialerfahrungen vor zweihundert Jahren. Nach dem Tagebuch des Chirurgen Johann Peter Oettinger* (Berlin, 1886). This 'edition' has been partially translated and annotated by Adam Jones, ed., *Brandenburg Sources for West African History 1680–1700* (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 180–98. On Johann Peter Oettinger see also Hartmut Nöldeke, *Die Fregatte 'Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde' und ihr Schiffs-Chirurg* (Herford, 1990).

other family papers, to the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. There it remained unnoticed by scholars until discovered by the authors during their initial researches in 2010–11. The discovery of this eighteenth-century manuscript copy of the original journal, titled 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf von Johann Peter Oettinger' (Travel Account and Biography of Johann Peter Oettinger)[2] allows us, for the first time, to truly examine the barber-surgeon's travels in Europe and in the Atlantic world.

Although Johann Peter Oettinger travelled much farther than most other journeymen-surgeons, his travel account belongs to a common genre, the journeyman's diary, which served to document the itineraries of a craftsman's travels and the masters with whom he had worked.[3] Oettinger's travels can be divided into seven segments: a journey through the Holy Roman Empire and the Dutch Republic (1682–88), his first transatlantic voyage on a Dutch vessel to the Caribbean and Suriname (1688–90), a second journey in the Dutch Republic and to East Frisia (1690–92), a second Atlantic voyage with a Brandenburg vessel to West Africa and the Caribbean (1692–93), an arduous journey from western France to East Frisia (1693–94), a third journey in the northern territories of the Holy Roman Empire (1694–96), and finally the return trip to his home town Künzelsau (1696). Among its many themes, this rich account allows us to examine three significant axes that connected the hinterlands of Central Europe with the Atlantic slave trade: migration, micro-investment and the construction of race. Before we examine these themes, a brief introduction to the Brandenburg African Company is necessary, as Oettinger's travels in the service of this enterprise generated the longest section of his account, which in turn emerges as one of the major narrative sources for the history of the company.

The Brandenburg African Company: A Hinterland State Enters the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Chartered in 1682 and officially dissolved in 1717, the Brandenburg African Company (BAC) – which in September 1692 was renamed the 'Brandenburg African-American Company' (BAAC) – undertook the first sustained engagement with Africa and the Atlantic slave trade by a German state.[4] The BAC holds a

2 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK, Berlin), VI. HA, Familienarchiv Oettinger, 12, 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf von Johann Peter Oettinger'.

3 Sigrid Wadauer, *Die Tour der Gesellen. Mobilität und Biographie vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M., 2005).

4 On the BAC/BAAC see Richard Schück, *Brandenburg-Preussens Kolonial-Politik unter dem Grossen Kurfürsten und seinen Nachfolgern (1647–1721)*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1888); Hermann Kellenbenz, 'Die Brandenburger auf St. Thomas', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft*

unique place in the history of connections between German-speaking hinterlands and the early modern slave trade, so it merits closer examination here.

The BAC was created by Elector Frederick William I (r. 1640–88) on the initiative of the Dutch émigré merchant, ship-owner, and privateer Benjamin Raule (1634–1707), first director of the company and first 'Director-General' of the nascent Brandenburg-Prussian navy. In 1682, the Elector of Brandenburg ruled a patchwork of overwhelmingly agrarian territories spread across Central Europe, still depopulated by the effects of the Thirty Years' War. Frederick William I looked to mercantilist policies to enrich his hinterland territories through global trade and the model for prosperity through trade was the Dutch Republic, to which he had close ties of religion and marriage. With the founding of the BAC in 1682, Frederick William used Dutch capital and maritime expertise to carve out a place in the Atlantic slave trade.

With access only to the eastern Baltic, Brandenburg-Prussia was a typical hinterland country and possessed none of the geopolitical prerequisites for the triangle trade. But the pull of the Atlantic economy was powerful. To enter this world, the Brandenburgers patched together a new network of Atlantic harbours and trade sites. After a voyage in 1680–81 from the Baltic port of Pillau to the Gold Coast in the south-west of modern-day Ghana, they signed an agreement (1683) with the port city of Emden, giving them access to the North Sea. Starting in 1683 they built trading posts on the Gold Coast: the

und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas 2 (1965), 196–217; Adam Jones, 'Brandenburg-Prussia and the Atlantic Slave Trade', *De la traite à l'esclavage*, ed. S. Daget, 2 vols (Paris, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 283–98; Nils Brübach, '"Seefahrt und Handel sind die fürnembsten Säulen eines Etats". Brandenburg-Preussen und der transatlantische Sklavenhandel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', *Amerikaner wider Willen. Beiträge zur Sklaverei in Lateinamerika*, ed. R. Zoller (Frankfurt a.M., 1994), pp. 11–42; Jürgen G. Nagel, 'Die Brandenburgisch-Africanische Compagnie. Ein Handelsunternehmen', *Scripta Mercaturae* 30 (1994), 44–94; Till Philip Koltermann, 'Zur brandenburgischen Kolonialgeschichte. Die Insel Arguin vor der Küste Mauretaniens', *Brandenburgische Entwicklungspolitische Hefte* 28 (1999), 8–31; Ulrich van der Heyden, *Rote Adler an Afrikas Küste. Die brandenburgisch-preußische Kolonie Großfriedrichsburg in Westafrika*, 2nd edn (Berlin, 2001); Andrea Weindl, *Die Kurbrandenburger im "atlantischen System", 1650–1720*, Arbeitspapiere zur Lateinamerikaforschung II/3 (2001), http://lateinamerika.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/fileadmin/sites/aspla/bilder/arbeitspapiere/weindl.pdf (accessed 12 February 2015); Sven Klosa, *Die Brandenburgische-Africanische Compagnie in Emden. Eine Handelscompagnie des ausgehenden 17. Jahrhunderts zwischen Protektionismus und unternehmerischer Freiheit* (Frankfurt a.M., 2011); Malte Stamm, 'Das Koloniale Experiment. Der Sklavenhandel Brandenburg-Preussens im transatlantischen Raum 1680–1718' (unpublished dissertation, University of Düsseldorf, 2011), http://d-nb.info/1036727564/34 (accessed 10 May 2014). Previous to the BAC, the only – brief and unsuccessful – attempt of a German state to enter the triangular trade had been made by the Duchy of Courland: see Otto Heinz Mattiesen, *Die Kolonial- und Überseepolitik der kurländischen Herzöge im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1940); Edgar Anderson, 'The Couronians and the West Indies. The First Settlements', *Caribbean Quarterly* 5/4 (1959), 264–71; Karin Jekabson-Lemanis, 'Balts in the Caribbean. The Duchy of Courland's Attempts to Colonize Tobago Island, 1638 to 1654', *Caribbean Quarterly* 46/2 (2010), 25–44.

major fort of Grossfriedrichsburg in Pokesu (Princess Town), as well as the Dorotheenschanze in Akwida and the Sophie Louise-Schanze in Tacrama.[5] In December 1685 Brandenburg-Prussia negotiated a thirty-year treaty with Denmark, allowing the BAC to sell enslaved Africans on the Danish island of St Thomas in the Caribbean. In 1687 they became treaty partners with the Emirs of Trarza, who allowed them to use the existing island-fort of Arguin (just off the coast of modern-day Mauritania) as a trading post and supply station.[6] Its attempts to acquire its own Caribbean islands and to establish territorial colonies failed, but Brandenburg-Prussia developed an essential network of Atlantic bases, each secured by agreements with local authorities.[7]

From the start, the slave trade was conceived as an important aspect of the BAC, though trade for gold and ivory was also meant to play a significant role in the company's commercial strategy. Alternative commodities continued to be sought on the African coasts for the whole period, especially in Mauritania, where gum arabic and ostrich feathers always constituted the core business. But by 1685 it was clear that the greatest profits could only be made with human cargo. As Frederick William I explained in September of that year: 'His Electoral Highness intends, because the African Company cannot develop without the trade of slaves to America, that one should establish the slave trade on the island of St. Thomas.'[8] With a harbour in the Caribbean guaranteed by the treaty with Denmark, the BAC could now fully engage in transatlantic trade. In 1687 Director Raule reported to Frederick William I that the first BAC slave ship had arrived at St Thomas, and that 'the slave trade … is becoming the foundation of our company.'[9]

As Malte Stamm has shown, most of these captured Africans were re-exported from St Thomas to French possessions (especially St Croix) and to minor British islands.[10] A significant (although not always traceable) share of the BAC's captives were, however, sold directly to English and French planters, whose demand overrode the mercantile monopolies of the chartered companies, or to Dutch merchants on Curaçao and St Eustachius, from whence they were brought – illegally or through the *asiento de negros* system – to the Spanish mainland. In 1693 Robert Morrison, an English agent in Holland, described the BAC testily as 'an Emden company trading under the Elector of Brandenburg's patent to Guinea'. He complained:

5 The BAC also tried to establish itself in Takoradi but after a few years it lost this base to the WIC.

6 An English translation of these agreements can be found in Jones, *Brandenburg Sources*.

7 Stamm, *Das Koloniale Experiment*, pp. 237ff.

8 GStA PK, I. HA, Repositur 65, Marine und Afrikanische Kompaniesachen, Nr. 40 (formerly Nr. 11), fol. 324v. On Brandenburg-Prussia's base on St Thomas see also Waldemar Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies under Company Rule (1671–1754)* (New York, 1917), pp. 71–94.

9 Schück, *Brandenburg-Preussens Kolonial-Politik*, vol. 2, p. 303.

10 Stamm, *Das Koloniale Experiment*, chapter 5, sections 2, 6 and 7.

> Though they [the BAC] pretend they send their ships to an island called St. Thomas in the West Indies, belonging to the Danes, which does not produce forty hogsheads of sugar a year, it is evident from their papers that the [return] cargoes were purchased at St. Croix, Martinique and other French islands.

In light of the incessant conflict in the Caribbean, he noted that 'this company, under pretence of trading to St. Thomas, supplies all the French islands with provisions and necessaries of war'.[11]

English and French planters' demand for slaves always exceeded the supply provided by their national chartered companies, and the BAC sought to profit from this gap. Between 1682 and 1715, ships sailing under the flag of Brandenburg-Prussia disembarked and sold at least 19,240 captive Africans.[12] Overall Brandenburg-Prussia's share of the slave trade remained well below that of the Dutch, whose ships delivered 87,391 African captives to the Americas during the same period.[13] However, if we focus on the Caribbean between 1690 and 1700, when the Brandenburg slave trade was at its height, the BAC/BAAC share is much higher. In these years, the Company disembarked 15,293 captives in the Caribbean on thirty-six voyages, whereas the vessels flying the Dutch flag delivered about 21,806 to the same region on fifty-two voyages. For about a decade, then, the BAC/BAAC was a growing force in the triangular trade and real competition for the Dutch in the most important slave import market of the New World.

Inevitably, this success drew the attention of their European rivals. Pressure from the Dutch in Africa and the general growth of the British slave trade in the Caribbean were a constant challenge to the Company. The most important factor of the BAAC's decline – though certainly not the only one – were the attacks on its fleet by the French.[14] The BAC/BAAC fleet, which never had more than sixteen ships at any one time, lost fifteen vessels between 1693 and 1702.[15] Oettinger's return voyage to Europe in 1693, for example, ended when his ship, the *Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde*, was seized and burned by the French

11 Extract of a letter from Robert Morrison, agent to the Transport Commissioners in Holland (10/20 April 1693), in W. J. Hardy and E. Bateson, eds, *Calendar of State Papers. Domestic series, of the reign of William and Mary … 1693* (London, 1903), p. 95.

12 An estimated 23,583 captives were embarked from the shores of Africa; 18.4 per cent of them died on board. The data concerning slave voyages by vessels flying the flag of Brandenburg-Prussia are taken from Stamm, *Das Koloniale Experiment*, pp. 398–401.

13 For slave voyages by Dutch ships see the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (http://www.slavevoyages.org).

14 Eleven ships were captured or confiscated by the French, six by the English, five by the Dutch, one by the Danes and one by an English pirate. Most of them were never returned to the BAC/BAAC. Moreover, a dozen vessels suffered shipwreck and one was probably destroyed during a slave revolt. Stamm, *Das Koloniale Experiment*, pp. 398–400.

15 Nagel, 'Die Brandenburgisch-Africanische Compagnie', p. 90.

in November of that year. After 1700 the fortunes of the BAC/BAAC declined rapidly. In 1717 the Company's fortresses on the Gold Coast were sold to the Dutch, and the Brandenburg African-American Company was dismissed as a 'chimera' by King Frederick William I (1713–40), who was much more interested in Prussia's military position in continental Europe than by overseas trade.

On the Gold Coast, however, the BAC was no chimera. In the 1690s its main trading post, the 'handsome and reasonably large' fort of Grossfriedrichsburg, was comparable to the Dutch headquarters at Elmina in size and strength.[16] From their first voyage to the Gold Coast in 1680–81, the Brandenburgers signed treaties with local rulers, traded for gold, ivory, and slaves, and attacked and defended trading posts along the coast. In 1692 the BAC joined with the English Royal African Company (RAC) and the Dutch WIC to send a common embassy to Denkyira, an inland kingdom that had become a major source of gold and slaves.[17] And further east, the Brandenburgers were in contact with the King of Hueda, in present-day Benin, to whose court in Savi Oettinger was admitted in early 1693.[18]

The manifold activities of the BAC/BAAC generated entrepreneurs' proposals, business records, travel accounts, and official reports – an interwoven set of texts in Dutch and German linking Berlin, its Baltic ports, and Emden with Arguin, the Gold Coast, and the Caribbean.[19] The company tapped into an existing network of connections and opened new migratory channels between the hinterlands of Central Europe and the Atlantic world.

Maritime Labour and its Migratory Hinterlands

While there has been some recent work on merchants from continental regions investing their capital in slaving voyages,[20] the participation of poor migrant workers from various hinterlands in the slave trade has been repeatedly noted

16 William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* (London, 1705), p. 7.

17 Kwame Yeboa Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600 to 1720. A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (Oxford, 1970), p. 159.

18 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 73–88. On the history of Hueda see Robin Law, '"The Common People Were Divided". Monarchy, Aristocracy and Political Factionalism in the Kingdom of Whydah, 1671–1727', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23/2 (1990), 201–29; and J. Cameron Monroe, *The Precolonial State in West Africa. Building Power in Dahomey* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 47–52.

19 On the importance of written communication in the making of merchant companies see Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink. Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 1–26, and the literature cited there.

20 For a general overview on investment by individual German merchants and the importance of cloth and manufactured goods from the Holy Roman Empire in the slave trade, see Klaus

but scarcely analysed. The nationally and racially mixed crews on Atlantic merchant ships are frequently described as a motley bunch of desperados or, with more empathy, as a cosmopolitan proletariat.[21] Thanks to works like that of Patricia Fumerton and Emma Christopher we now know more about the social life of sailors on English and British ships in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but still there is much work to do for slaving vessels from other countries and periods.[22] It would be especially helpful to know more about the lives of ordinary crew members *before* they were recruited to serve on the slave ships. More background on their migratory paths would allow us to go beyond the cliché of a ship's company thrown together by chance and assess the depth of the connections between the Atlantic and more remote areas. The extensive presence of German-speaking sailors, craftsman and surgeons in the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC) has been reconstructed in detail.[23] German-speaking labourers were so numerous in the ranks of the VOC that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had a specific role in settling the Cape Colony in South Africa.[24] There is no systematic study on the place of migrants from the Holy Roman Empire in the WIC, but their involvement seems similar. And like the German hinterland merchants who migrated to Atlantic ports in the eighteenth century,[25] many of these maritime workers

Weber, 'Deutschland, der atlantische Sklavenhandel und die Plantagenwirtschaft der Neuen Welt (15. bis 19. Jahrhundert)', *Journal of Modern European History* 7/1 (2009), 37–67; for a special focus on Prussia and Saxony, see Michael Zeuske and Jörg Ludwig, 'Amerikanische Kolonialwaren und Wirtschaftspolitik in Preussen und Sachsen. Prolegomena (17./18. und frühes 19. Jahrhundert)', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 32 (1995), 257–301; and on Switzerland see Niklaus Stettler, Peter Haenger and Robert Labhardt, *Baumwolle, Sklaven und Kredite. Die Basler Welthandelsfirma Christoph Burckhardt & Cie. in revolutionärer Zeit (1789–1815)* (Basel, 2004), as well as Thomas David, Bouda Etemad and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, *Schwarze Geschäfte. Die Beteiligung von Schweizern an Sklaverei und Sklavenhandel im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Zurich, 2005).

21 The latter perspective is adopted especially by Peter Linebaugh and Markus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA, 2000).

22 Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and their Captive Cargoes 1730–1807* (Cambridge, 2006), and Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled. The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2006), chapter 6. For a comparative overview see Paul van Royen, Jaap Bruijn and Jan Lucassen, eds, *'Those Emblems of Hell'? European Sailors and the Maritime Labour Market, 1570–1870* (St John's, Nfld, 1997).

23 Roelof van Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer. Deutsche in Diensten der Vereinigten Ostindischen Kompanie der Niederlande (VOC), 1600–1800* (Hamburg, 2003), and Iris Bruijn, *Ship's Surgeons of the Dutch East India Company. Commerce and the Progress of Medicine in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009).

24 Gerrit Schutte, 'Company and Colonists at the Cape, 1652–1795', *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1820*, ed. R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (Cape Town, 1979), pp. 283–323.

25 Klaus Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel 1680–1830. Unternehmen und Familien in Hamburg, Cádiz und Bordeaux* (Munich, 2004).

came not from coastal areas, but from regions farther inland. In the account of his BAC/BAAC voyage Oettinger mentions several fellow hinterlanders including soldiers from Eisfeld, Dresden, and Strasbourg.[26] As a 1688 muster roll shows, only a minority of the employees of the Company serving on the Gold Coast were actually subjects of the Prince-Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia itself. Most came from other territories of the Holy Roman Empire and from the Dutch Republic. Men from Scotland, Courland, Hungary, and Poland-Lithuania also found work at the BAC trading posts in West Africa.[27]

How can we explain this migratory phenomenon? We might be tempted to use a traditional push-and-pull model: no doubt the boom of Atlantic seafaring and the wage differentials between the rich Dutch Republic and the poorer German states played an important role.[28] But to presume that these German-speaking labourers were automatically and directly attracted from their home towns to the labour-hungry ports of Rotterdam, Amsterdam, or Emden would be mistaken. As Oettinger's journal shows, their stories are far more complex.

When Johann Peter Oettinger first left his home village of Künzelsau in 1681, he was fifteen years old and he sought neither to work in the Dutch Republic nor to discover the wide world of the Atlantic. He simply moved to the neighbouring town of Schwäbisch Hall to do an apprenticeship as a barber-surgeon.[29] About eighteen months later he completed this educational migration and returned to Künzelsau. But he did not stay long: as with all craftsmen, after his apprenticeship he was obliged to travel as a journeyman. So he left Künzelsau again. During the first two years of his journey he stayed in Heidelberg, Pforzheim, Philippsburg and Worms, working in each town for several months for an established barber-surgeon.[30] This first segment of his

26 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 53, 63 and 107.

27 Jones, *Brandenburg Sources*, pp. 145f. For a detailed discussion of the heterogeneous make-up of the BAC/BAAC garrisons on the Gold Coast – which in later years also included employees born in the Americas, in West Africa and even in India – see Roberto Zaugg, 'Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa? Brandenburg-Prussia, Atlantic Entanglements and National Memory', *Shadows of Empire in West Africa. New Perspectives on European Fortifications*, ed. J. K. Osei-Tutu and V. E. Smith (forthcoming).

28 For a push-and-pull analysis of seasonal migrations in the North Sea area, see Jan Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe 1600–1900. The Drift to the North Sea* (London, 1987). More specifically on migrant labourers in the Dutch maritime sector, see Jelle van Lottum, *Across the North Sea. The Impact of the Dutch Republic on International Labour Migration, c.1550–1850* (Amsterdam, 2007).

29 On barber-surgeons in Schwäbisch Hall, see Andreas Maisch, '"Confusion" und "Contusion". Barbiere in der Stadt', *Auf Leben und Tod. Menschen und Medizin in Schwäbisch Hall vom Mittelalter bis 1950*, ed. H. Krause and A. Maisch (Schwäbisch Hall, 2011), pp. 85–122; for a more general study of this professional sector see Sabine Sander, *Handwerkschirurgen. Sozialgeschichte einer verdrängten Berufsgruppe* (Göttingen, 1989).

30 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 1–4.

craftsman's migration, regional in scope, was likely based on social networks which he had already established before leaving home.

In 1685 Oettinger decided to travel north-east from Worms to Kassel, then east to Jena to visit a brother studying theology there. However, in none of the cities along this route did he find steady work, so his stays were all brief. He then tried his luck in the south, in Nuremberg, but found no suitable employment there either. After months without work, Oettinger went back to the south-western territories of the Holy Roman Empire where his connections were better; he then worked for more than a year in Mainz and in the small town of Bingen before heading down the Rhine to Düsseldorf. In Düsseldorf – or more likely in Aachen – he seems to have learned about opportunities in the Dutch Republic and decided to try his luck there. In Amsterdam he worked for a year in the practice of Nicolaus Ravenstein, a surgeon from Hamburg. Only when his employment contract with Ravenstein ended did he decide to take the WIC surgeons' examination, accept an offer from this mercantile enterprise, and leave for his first transatlantic voyage to the Caribbean and Suriname.[31]

This connection between craft migration and maritime work, seen in the lives of other barber-surgeons,[32] is apparent in his second voyage as well. After returning from the West Indies, Oettinger could have continued in the service of the WIC. But he did not. Instead he moved to Harderwijk, where he worked for two years in the practice of an established barber-surgeon. We can presume that he grew better and better integrated in a regional network of social relations and information about job opportunities. When he left Harderwijk, he did not head back to south-west Germany, but instead travelled to Hallum and then to Emden in East Frisia, where in 1692 he was engaged by the BAC to sail to West Africa and St Thomas as a surgeon on board the *Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde*.

31 On the WIC, see Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815* (Cambridge, 1990); Henk J. den Heijer, *Goud, ivoor en slaven. Scheepvaart en handel van de Tweede Westindische Compagnie op Afrika, 1674–1740* (Zutphen, 1997); Pieter C. Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade 1500–1850* (New York, 2006).

32 See, for example, the travel accounts of Andreas Josua Ultzheimer (from Swabia, born 1578) and of Samuel Brun (from Basel, 1590–1668), who in the early seventeenth century visited Africa as a ship's surgeon on Dutch vessels, or the autobiography of Oettinger's contemporary Johann Dietz (1665–1738), who worked as a military surgeon in the armies of the Elector of Brandenburg and as a ship's surgeon aboard a whaling vessel: Samuel Brun, *Schiffarten, welche er in etliche newe Länder und Insulen zu fünff underschiedlichen malen mit Gottes hülff gethan* (Basel, 1624); Andreas Josua Ultzheimer, *Warhaffte Beschreibung ettlicher Reisen in Europa, Africa und America 1596–1610. Die abenteurlichen Weltreisen eines schwäbischen Wundarztes*, ed. S. Werg (Stuttgart, 1971); Johann Dietz, *Mein Lebenslauf*, ed. F. Kemp (Munich, 1966). The travelogues of Ultzheimer and Brun have been partially translated and critically annotated by Adam Jones, ed., *German Sources for West African History 1599–1699* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 18–96.

The third continental migration of Oettinger was hardly voluntary. It began in Brest, where the crew of the Brandenburg ship was disembarked after capture by a French fleet in November 1693. In the winter of 1693–94 Oettinger walked (!) from Brittany to Emden in order to collect his pay from the BAAC at their headquarters. Once arrived in Emden, however, he did not seek to return to his family (although he had not seen them for twelve years). Instead, he sought new opportunities. He first travelled south, but his new East Frisian connections drew him back to Aurich. There he worked in the practice of a barber's widow with whom he seemed to settle down. It was only the steady pressure of his family which made him leave this woman and travel back to his home village, Künzelsau.[33]

As Oettinger's travels show, the presence of hinterland workers in the Atlantic slave trade depended on multipolar geographical mobility. Many hinterlanders worked in the Atlantic economy, but we suspect that few left home with Atlantic ports in mind. The direction of their mobility was constantly reoriented by the networks and information they accessed during their travels. At each stage, migrants had to decide whether to stay or move on. And if they decided to leave, they needed information, resources and connections to choose another goal.

In the end, Oettinger's migration led him back to his home village. But he had many opportunities to stay elsewhere along his route. In West Africa, he was offered an employment as chief surgeon in the Brandenburg fort of Grossfriedrichsburg,[34] and in Aurich he found a barber-surgeon's practice and perhaps also a potential wife. The routes Oettinger travelled look quite tangled and confused. But it is these connections that wove the fabric of the early modern Atlantic world together with its migratory hinterlands.

Personal Trade as Micro-Investment in the Slave Business

More research is needed to assess possible trade connections between Oettinger's home region, Franconia, and the Atlantic world. The Swabian region of neighbouring Württemberg was producing linen for export by the mid seventeenth century, and it is possible that WIC or BAC ships carried linen from Swabia or Franconia in their holds.[35] Oettinger's personal investment in the Atlantic trade is evident in his journal. When he returned to Amsterdam in January 1690 after his first trip to the West Indies, he noted

33 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 147–8.

34 Ibid., p. 59. He was also asked to stay at St Thomas but declined the offer: 'They wanted me to stay on land as a surgeon, but I didn't care for the idea.' Ibid., p. 109.

35 Hans Medick, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen 1650–1900. Lokalgeschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 83–91.

that upon arrival 'the noble West-Indian masters of the Company inspected our crates [*Kisten*] and released us from our oath'.[36] These crates remind us of the breadth of small-scale participation in Atlantic trade by the employees of the chartered companies.[37]

After his second West Indian voyage, Oettinger was returning to Emden aboard the *Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde* in November 1693 when the frigate was, as mentioned above, attacked by several French naval vessels.[38] The French plundered the cargo, took the crew prisoner and then burned the BAAC ship. Although Oettinger notes thankfully that 'no one was allowed to take anything from us once we were on their [the French] ship', he had only the clothes on his back.[39] He lamented that 'my crates of sugar, tobacco, cotton, medicines, and everything else was gone'.[40] Oettinger gives no specific account of the number or value of the crates, but had noted earlier in the journal that 'I was often on shore buying cotton and tobacco' while in St Thomas.[41] Clearly, he had hoped his investment in these commodities would bring a fine profit when he reached Emden.

This hinterlander's micro-investment reveals an often overlooked aspect of the Atlantic trade. Chartered companies allowed limited private trade by certain employees on board (the captain and a few others), but such dealings are largely invisible in company records. The personal trade of lesser employees such as the young Oettinger appears only in cases of conflict. Evidence is limited, but this micro-investment alongside the Atlantic slave trade seems to have been common. In 1681, for example, 'Doctor [Samuel] Stone' (a surgeon employed by the RAC on the Gold Coast) made and then retracted an allegation regarding private trade against RAC official James Nightingale.[42] Together Stone and Nightingale then accused another RAC official, Francis Frankland, of trading privately with the Portuguese and with English interlopers. Moreover, the two men claimed that RAC officer Arthur Wendover had purchased numerous textiles from a Dutch interloper ('46 fine

36 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 27.

37 See Van Gelder, *Ostindische Abenteuer*, pp. 180–3, and Bruijn, *Ship's Surgeons*, pp. 182–90, on the opportunities for private trade by German and other employees of the VOC.

38 The *Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde* had taken on a large cargo of cocoa beans at St Thomas and the decision to sell it to the Spanish by stopping at Cadiz on the return voyage to Emden led to the ship's disastrous encounter with the French. Oettinger and the crew protested the detour to Cadiz (see 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 111–12). On the cargo of the *Friedrich Wilhelm zu Pferde*, see Kellenbenz, 'Die Brandenburger', p. 207.

39 And his gold, hidden in a bandage on his leg. 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', pp. 115–16.

40 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 116.

41 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 110.

42 Robin Law, ed., *The Local Correspondence of the Royal African Company 1681–1699*, vol. 1: *The English in West Africa 1681–1683* (Oxford, 1997), docs 90 and 401.

sletias,[43] 5 sayes,[44] and 7 perpetuanoes')[45] for his own local trade. Similarly, the records of the BAC concerning the Zeeland interloper *Creutz*, seized by the BAC on the Gold Coast in 1686, show that when it was taken, the ship's second mate ('Unter Stürmann') and surgeon 'had made their own particular cargoes',[46] and the first mate had a private venture worth 70 Gulden on board.[47] In 1699 the governor of the RAC fortress in Anomabu, Gerrard Gore, complained to the RAC headquarters at Cape Coast Castle that the 'serjeant' and soldiers of the fortress 'have ever since they have been here had interlopeing goods, and sould at under prices in the towne … cheaper than the Companys prices in the Castle'. One of the men, 'Daniel Vanchesterfleet souldier', had 'two roles [rolls] of tobacco and a cask of Barbadoes rumme' to trade. Gore reported that the sergeant told him that such private trade 'was none of my business, and that he and them might doe what they pleased, I was to mind the Company goods and nothing else'.[48] Small and smallest-scale private commerce seems common to even the lowest-ranking employees. One suspects that company officials tolerated private ventures because the officials were usually trading privately themselves and needed their subordinates to keep quiet about it. Further, the forthright resistance to Gore's attempts to suppress private trade at Anomabu suggests that these employees felt they had a right to trade on their own.

Access to private trade was sought by officials and subordinates alike. In 1714 RAC official William Brainie complained that 'the Compa[ny] think it very hard to allow even the first of their Servants to gain anything considerable on this Coast'. Brainie then compared his plight with the freedom of the crew of the interloper *Saint Thomas*, captained by Jacob Burgeson. Brainie noted that, in contrast, 'Capt. Burgisson's Sailers (as I have it from their own mouths) have in this one voyage gaind some £60 others 70 and others 100 or more pounds'.[49] In this case 'even' the lowest-ranking crew members took the opportunity to trade.

The implications of this micro-investment in the Guinea trade and in

43 Linen cloth, originally from Silesia but also made in England and the Netherlands.

44 Fine woollen cloth, made in England and the Netherlands.

45 Hard-wearing serge (wool) cloth made in England.

46 Interrogation of the former director and bookkeeper of Grossfriedrichsburg, Joost van Colster and Daniel Reindermann (Emden, 9 March 1686), GStA PK, I. HA, Repositur 65, Marine und Afrikanische Kompaniesachen, 42, 8r–22v. A partial translation of this document has been published by Jones, *Brandenburg Sources*, doc. 61.

47 Interrogation of the first mate of the Dutch interloper ship Dirck Blaues (Emden, 27 Febr. 1686), Stadtarchiv Emden, Protokoll XIV, 1, p. 46.

48 Robin Law, ed., *The Local Correspondence of the Royal African Company 1681–1699*, vol. 3: *The English in West Africa 1691–1699* (Oxford, 2006), doc. 930.

49 E. Donnan, ed., 'Accounts of Fort Commenda', *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 2: *The Eighteenth Century* (Washington, 1931), doc. 79, p. 190.

the products of slave labour deserve further consideration. If this kind of personal trading on one's own account was a widespread and lasting feature of the Atlantic world, then common sailors, soldiers and barber-surgeons were more personally invested (financially and emotionally) in the Atlantic system than has previously been assumed.[50] This aspect of the slave business scarcely appears in the records of the chartered companies, but sources like Oettinger's diary provide a glimpse of its extent.

Race, Gender and Slavery

Johann Peter Oettinger saw much more of the world than his fellow hinterlanders. What did he learn on his travels from Künzelsau to Curaçao and from Emden to the Gold Coast and St Thomas? He learned that he could seek his fortune in the Atlantic world, a world of slavery and trade. Like the majority of his contemporaries, Oettinger did not understand his participation in the slave trade as a moral issue.[51] He witnessed the daily and manifold atrocities committed on a slave ship and in his role as a surgeon he participated actively in the practices which enabled them, such as the careful inspection of captive Africans for purchase.[52] We note that in his journal – which he certainly knew would be read by his family, if not more widely – he did not obscure the violence committed against enslaved persons, nor did he feel compelled to justify these acts and his personal participation in the trade. He describes the branding of newly purchased Africans (on the shoulder with letters 'CABC' for Churfürstliche Africanische Brandenburgische Compagnie), the Middle Passage, the torture of slaves, and slave labour without comment.

His abiding moral concern is not with the slave trade, but with property and theft. He notes carefully when something is stolen from him, or when the property of others is taken. Indeed, property and its possession are a key theme in his journal. His narrative tells the adventures of his property: the gold he hides from the French under a bandage on his leg, his lost crates of sugar and tobacco, the gold ring he receives from a grateful patient in Grossfriedrichsburg, and rings stolen and recovered just before he leaves Grossfriedrichsburg for the Slave Coast. He notes carefully that the

50 See Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship. A Human History* (New York, 2007), and Fumerton, *Unsettled*, p. 102.

51 To extend the metaphor of the hinterlands and borderlands, one could argue that Europeans like Oettinger, lacking any moral perspective on the trade, occupied a no man's land rather than a hinterland.

52 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 83. These enslaved Africans were themselves often hinterlanders, marched more or less long distances from sites of capture inland to the slave-trading posts on the coasts of West Africa.

possessions of those who died at sea were auctioned off, with the proceeds to be given to their heirs when the ship returned home.

How did Oettinger understand human beings as property? He first encountered gang slavery as he arrived in Curaçao on his voyage with the WIC in 1688: 'Arrived on the 25th of September at 5 or 6 in the evening; at Curaçao our ship was pulled on land or on the dock with a rope by some hundred naked Moors, men and women.'[53] Race and gender mark one another in Oettinger's descriptions of African bodies, just as they do in seventeenth-century images. The 23-year-old Oettinger tended to about three hundred men and women enslaved by the WIC on a three-month journey from Curaçao to Suriname in 1688–89.[54] During the voyage three African women gave birth. He described how 'they bind the [newborn] child on their back with an old linen cloth, throw their breast to him over the shoulder, and let him suckle. They look like a pair of young apes.'[55] In the early seventeenth century Theodor de Bry was one of the first to represent a recurring image in the depiction of African women: the claim that they could suckle their children over their shoulder (see Fig. 1.1).[56] As Jennifer Morgan has shown, this image powerfully dehumanised African women, and it had a broad reach, echoing across the Atlantic world.[57]

Oettinger's perception of childbirth among the enslaved Africans also prompted comparison with an animal:

53 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 17.

54 Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas 1680–1791* (Assen, 1985), p. 167, cites the WIC order to ship these slaves, classed as *magrones* (sick, weak, or injured slaves), to Suriname.

55 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 21.

56 See Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa* (Aldershot, 2012), p. 143. On the representation of Africa and the Africans in the works published by the de Bry family, see Ernst van den Boogaart, 'De Bry's Africa', *Inszenierte Welten. Die west- und ostindischen Reisen der Verleger de Bry, 1590–1630 / Staging New Worlds. De Bry's Illustrated Travel Reports, 1590–1630*, ed. S. Burghartz (Basel, 2004), pp. 95–157, and Dorothee Schmidt, *Reisen ins Orientalische Indien. Wissen über fremde Welten um 1600* (Cologne, 2015). On representations of Africans in early modern German culture, see in the first instance Marilía Dos Santos Lopes, *Afrika. Eine neue Welt in deutschen Schriften des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1992), and Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren. Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Hamburg, 2001).

57 Jennifer L. Morgan, '"Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder". Male Travellers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 54/1 (1997), 167–92. The Scottish traveller William Lithgow described the same practice by the women of northern Ireland after a visit there in 1620: 'The other as goodly sight I saw, was women travayling the way, or toyling at home, carry their Infants about their neckes, and laying the dugges over their shoulders, would give sucke to the Babes behinde their backes, without taking them in their armes.' William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures & Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteene Yeares Travayles from Scotland to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrica* (Glasgow, 1906), p. 378.

Figure 1.1. 'Von den Weibern und ihrer Kleidung daselbst', detail. Illustration from Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry (eds), *Orientalische Indien*, vol. 6: [Pieter de Marees], *Wahrhafftige historische Beschreibung deß gewaltigen Goltreichen Königreich Guinea* (Frankfurt a.M., 1603)

> I was quite familiar with the three children born on the way because I was their midwife. The mother lies in no child-bed; instead she walks around and stretches out like a cat with its young.[58]

Oettinger's European contemporaries understood the pain of childbirth as a curse that marked all women descended from Eve. Women who bore children differently, seemingly without pain, might not possess the same humanity as Eve's Christian descendants.[59] This gendered and dehumanising perspective on African bodies was also part of Oettinger's education as he travelled from hinterland to metropole to colony.

At the end of the nineteenth century, when European colonialism in Africa was at its height and ideas of racial superiority had fully developed into a 'scientific' system, the question of slavery was, of course, considered in clearly different terms. In early modern times, one of the strongest factors in the consolidation of the idea of black inferiority was the emergence of slaveholder societies in the Americas based on the permanent reproduction of the 'colour line'.[60] By contrast, in the second half of the nineteenth century, when all European states had abolished both the slave trade and slavery, anti-slavery ideas were integrated into 'the catchall project known as the "civilising mission"'.[61] Thus, after maintaining intricate relations with slave-exporting African states for centuries and ultimately removing about twelve million enslaved Africans, slavery in Africa was now highlighted as one of the most evident signs of the Africans' 'barbarity'. Abolition became an ideological tool for the legitimation of the continent's conquest by European powers.

The literary retelling of Johann Peter Oettinger's journal, published in 1885–86 by his great-great-grandson Paul Oettinger, bears the signs of this contradiction. As noted above, the published text is far from being a faithful edition of the manuscript. Rather, the events and settings provided by the manuscript are transformed into a sort of historical novel. To enhance the pleasure of a popular readership, Paul Oettinger – who for decades worked as editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Militärzeitung*, one of the many newspapers

58 'Reisebeschreibung und Lebenslauf', p. 21.

59 See Jenny Shaw, *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference* (Athens, GA, 2013), pp. 33–4, on claims that Irish, Native American and African women gave birth with little or no pain.

60 See most recently Cristina Malcolmson, *Studies of Skin Colour in the Early Royal Society. Boyle, Cavendish, Swift* (Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2013), and Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness. Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 2011). The development is summarised in Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery. From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (London, 1998), pp. 307–50.

61 Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade in Southeastern Nigeria, 1885–1950* (Rochester, NY, 2006), p. 31. On the connection between anti-slavery and imperialism, see also Amalia Ribi Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism. The Politics of Anti-Slavery Activism, 1880–1940* (Oxford, 2015).

published at that time for a military audience – transformed the rather dry and often elliptic style of the barber-surgeon's annotations into exuberant prose, evoking – in a quite stereotypic way – exotic landscapes and the harsh but manly life of adventurous seafarers. To this end, various entirely invented passages were added to the story, infusing it with the rhetoric of African inferiority, enriched by common tropes taken from nineteenth-century racist, pseudo-ethnographic discourse. Again, gender was a central to the presentation of race.[62] On the one hand, African woman were depicted as exploited by their men ('As in the case of most uncivilised people, women are considered only as beasts of burden'); on the other, the African women are imagined as thieving ('They have little concept of "mine and thine" and my Negro women servant stole from me as well') and sexually voracious ('I found the young Negresses not at all shy … and I was more than a little astounded by the coquettish arts of seduction used by these savages').[63] In other words, Africa was represented as a world where neither male authority over women, nor the material and carnal desires of women were disciplined by the norms of civilisation. Again, it is important to note that these and similar passages have no reference point at all in the original diary. They were entirely the work of Paul Oettinger.

Paul Oettinger's agenda, however, was not only literary. He rewrote his ancestor's diary with a clear political goal. The timing of his publication makes this clear. After remaining inside the family for generations, the story of Johann Peter Oettinger was for the first time presented to a broader public in 1885 – the year of the Berlin Congo Conference and just a year after the German Empire had entered the 'Scramble for Africa'. By publishing the barber-surgeon's story under the title *Unter kurbrandenburgischer Flagge. Deutsche-Kolonialerfahrungen vor zweihundert Jahren* (Under the Flag of the Electorate of Brandenburg. German Colonial Experiences Two Hundred Years Ago), Paul Oettinger joined the rapidly growing trend celebrating the BAC as the precursor of modern German colonialism – a trend clearly aimed at providing a historical basis for contemporary imperial politics.[64] The

62 On the link between gender and race in modern colonial culture, foundational works include Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis, 1986); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power. Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, 2002).

63 Oettinger, *Unter kurbrandenburgischer Flagge*, p. 45. This passage about the 'seductive negresses' was further appropriated by Wilhelm Jensen, who integrated it into his own historical novel on the BAC: *Brandenburg'scher Pavillon hoch! Eine Geschichte aus Kurbrandenburgs Kolonialzeit* (Berlin, 1902); on this issue see Wolfgang Struck, *Die Eroberung der Phantasie. Kolonialismus, Literatur und Film zwischen deutschem Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen, 2010), p. 83.

64 Klaus-Jürgen Matz, 'Das Kolonialexperiment des Grossen Kurfürsten in der Geschichtsschreibung des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts', *'Ein sonderbares Licht in Teutschland'*.

Prince-Elector Frederick William, Benjamin Raule and other initiators of the BAC were praised as heroes and integrated into German national history as the first German colonisers of Africa. The appropriation of the BAC 'epos' by the colonial culture of the *Kaiserreich* had to face, however, one major problem: the basis of the company in the slave trade. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century it had been the 'foundation' of the company, but by the end of the nineteenth century slavery was considered as an atrocity now practised only by the 'inferior races' which European colonisers were called to 'civilise'. In the case of Paul Oettinger's literary manipulation of the barber-surgeon's journal, the slave trade could not be obliterated, being the very purpose of the voyage on the Brandenburg frigate that Johann Peter joined in 1692. Thus, to 'save' his ancestor and maintain him as a positive figure, Paul Oettinger added another completely invented passage, in which Johann Peter 'writes' as a compassionate man, instinctively opposed to the cruelties of the slave trade:

> what a chill of horror came over me, as I entered the places [on board the ship] in which the unlucky victims were kept, inhaling the horrid atmosphere in which they were forced to live … and my heart convulsed when I was forced to watch as those who bore the shape of men were treated like animals.[65]

Paul Oettinger's text integrated the sufferings of the middle passage, which had become (thanks to abolitionist literature) a central element in Western discourse on slavery, into a new German colonial vision. Thus the account of Johann Peter Oettinger offers us insights into the daily life in the Atlantic world in the seventeenth century, but also allows us to follow the shifting attitudes towards slavery in German culture, from the Old Regime to the late nineteenth century.

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The travel journal of Johann Peter Oettinger reveals a wealth of seldom-seen connections between the Atlantic world and its seventeenth-century Germanic hinterlands. It is a valuable source for the history of the BAC/BAAC, the most significant attempt of a German state to participate in the slave trade. And it is a significant document for the reconstruction of migratory, economic, and cultural connections between this business and other German hinterland

Beiträge zur Geschichte des Grossen Kurfürsten von Brandenburg (1640–1688), ed. G. Heinrich (Berlin, 1990), pp. 191–202; Adjaï Paulin Oloukpona-Yinnon, *Unter deutschen Palmen. Die 'Musterkolonie' Togo im Spiegel deutscher Kolonialliteratur (1884–1944)* (Frankfurt a.M., 1998), pp. 69ff; Zaugg, 'Grossfriedrichsburg'.

65 Oettinger, *Unter kurbrandenburgischer Flagge*, p. 63.

areas.[66] These themes suggest that autobiographical texts and other sources of the history of everyday life are indispensable for our understanding of trans-continental contacts and exchanges. Study of the common people – individuals and families – who laboured to connect the early modern Atlantic to its various hinterlands can reveal far broader and more capillary connections than seen in the existing scholarship. Travel from the hinterlands to the Atlantic world meant an extraordinary new set of experiences, opportunities, and social interactions. The Oettinger journal reveals these connections, and their perception and representation by a young man working his way through – and investing in – the Atlantic economy.

66 Our research on Oettinger and his journal will produce two works. The first, a monograph by Roberto Zaugg, will contextualise and assess Oettinger's migration, his slave ship voyages and his cross-cultural contacts at the court of Savi in the West African kingdom of Hueda. This study will also examine how Oettinger's journal has been handed down by his descendants and manipulated during the late nineteenth century in the context of German colonialism. The second project will be an English edition of Oettinger's journal edited and introduced by Craig Koslofsky and Roberto Zaugg. This translation will make the journal more accessible for research and teaching.